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Library of Congress Selects the MetaArchive Cooperative as a Continuing Partner in the National Digital Preservation Program

Atlanta, GA., December 7, 2009 – The MetaArchive Cooperative, an independent, international membership association that coordinates collaborative and distributed digital preservation solutions for cultural memory organizations, has received \$659,052 to preserve our nation’s at-risk *digital* materials as part of the Library of Congress’s award-winning National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP). With this funding, the Cooperative will continue to encourage and support universities, libraries, archives, museums, and government agencies as they take an active role in the preservation of their digital assets in the face of daily threats such as blackouts, fires, and hurricanes, as well as basic hardware and software failure.

“For centuries, archives and libraries have borne the responsibility of preserving our nation’s cultural assets,” said Katherine Skinner, the Executive Director of the Educopia Institute, which hosts the MetaArchive Cooperative. “The MetaArchive Cooperative enables these groups to continue providing that essential service for at-risk *digital* materials, including our nation’s political, social, and cultural assets that are now created and stored on computers—newspapers, book manuscripts, correspondence files, and other items that researchers will depend upon in order to understand our world and its transition into the digital age.”

The Cooperative was founded in 2004 by Emory University, Auburn University, Florida State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Louisville, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University as part of the Library of Congress’s NDIIPP. As one of its initial collaborative ventures, the Cooperative developed an organizational model and implemented a technical infrastructure based on the LOCKSS software for preserving the digital assets of cultural memory organizations through a low-cost, geographically distributed framework.

The Cooperative began actively preserving content in 2005, including library-based repositories and ephemeral works such as online exhibitions and cultural history Web site displays. For example:

As a founding member of the MetaArchive Cooperative, **Auburn University** uses the distributed digital preservation network to archive both born-digital works (e.g. video files from the university's Sesquicentennial Lecture Series) and scanned materials from the Auburn University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Department, including photographs and documents on university history, photographs from the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, the Eugene B. Sledge Collection, yearbooks, and football programs.

As one of the newest members of the Cooperative, **Clemson University** will use the MetaArchive distributed digital preservation network to archive digitized image and text collections, datasets and other born-digital objects. Collections include scholarly publications, theses and dissertations, Cooperative Extension Service photographs, area maps, newspapers, and textile mill manuscripts and photographs.

In the past year, **Boston College** has made the transition from a paper-based submission process to an electronic submission process for all of its dissertations and theses. This collection of graduate scholarship is being preserved as digital content in the ETD (Electronic Theses & Dissertations) archive of the MetaArchive Cooperative.

Florida State University uses the distributed network to archive born-digital works (including the FSU Undergraduate Honors Theses collection and FSU Biological Science Faculty member Dr. A.K.S.K. Prasad's images of biological silica) and scanned materials from the Libraries' Special Collections (including FSU's "Flying High" Circus historical photos, brochures, and videos).

As a founding member of the MetaArchive Cooperative, **Georgia Tech** uses the distributed preservation network to archive electronic theses and dissertations, conference proceedings, technical reports, and other born-digital materials found in SMARTech, the university's institutional repository, as well as scanned materials from Georgia Tech Archives and Records Management, such as university archives, historical manuscripts, and rare books related to Georgia Tech's institutional history and educational mission.

Rice University's institutional repository houses scholarly works, which include electronic theses and dissertations, faculty papers and publications, scanned Special Collections, The Americas Archive, and Travelers in the Middle East Archive. The distributed preservation network will allow Rice to preserve its collections.

As a founding member of the MetaArchive Cooperative, the **University of Louisville** is preserving uncompressed audio and image files from its digitized materials relating to Southern history and culture, including oral histories of African Americans and historic images of people, places, and crafts from Kentucky. They plan to soon add born-digital documentation of the August 4, 2009 flood which caused extensive damage on campus and within the city of Louisville, as well as born-digital and digitized theses and dissertations.

As a founding member of the MetaArchive Cooperative, **Virginia Tech** uses the distributed preservation network to archive both born-digital works (e.g., electronic theses and dissertations, television news scripts, and the Faculty Archives) and scanned works from Special Collections, including university history, Civil War letters, and culinary manuscripts.

By 2007, the Cooperative had become an independent organization and began accepting new members at the discretion of the Steering Committee. Its membership has grown to include: Boston College, Clemson University, the Folger Shakespeare Library, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rice University, the University of South Carolina, and the University of Hull in the UK. In partnership with the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD), the Cooperative has also created a dark archive of Electronic Theses and Dissertations.

As NDIIPP draws to a close in 2010 and moves to formalize a national digital stewardship alliance, the Library of Congress has selected the MetaArchive Cooperative to be a continuing partner due to its sustained contribution to national digital stewardship. The Library of Congress will provide the MetaArchive Cooperative with operational funding in the amount of \$659,052 during the contract period, August 1, 2009 - July 31, 2011.

Commenting on this next phase, Martin Halbert, founder and President of the Cooperative, stated that the Library of Congress should be “commended for its commitment to empowering institutional collaboration and sustainability in the preservation of our nation’s cultural memory. The Cooperative members are very proud of what they have accomplished through this unique collaborative endeavor. It has never been easy for universities in particular to pull together in such a prolonged fashion—but each of our members recognizes the importance of fulfilling the critical need for digital preservation.”

This support will enable the MetaArchive Cooperative to maintain and supplement the Cooperative’s growth and viability and to encourage other communities to also implement their own low-cost, distributed digital preservation networks using LOCKSS. As Katherine Skinner, the Program Manager for the MetaArchive Cooperative, has said, “Our goal is to encourage the adoption of distributed digital preservation. In addition to welcoming new members into the Cooperative and our existing networks, we also want other cultural memory organizations to freely adopt our technical and administrative frameworks to form new preservation networks of their own.”

For additional information please contact Katherine Skinner at 404-783-2534 or katherine.skinner@metaarchive.org. Also feel free to visit the MetaArchive Cooperative at their public website: <http://www.metaarchive.org/>.

The MetaArchive Cooperative is an independent, international membership association administered by the Educopia Institute based in Atlanta, Georgia.

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